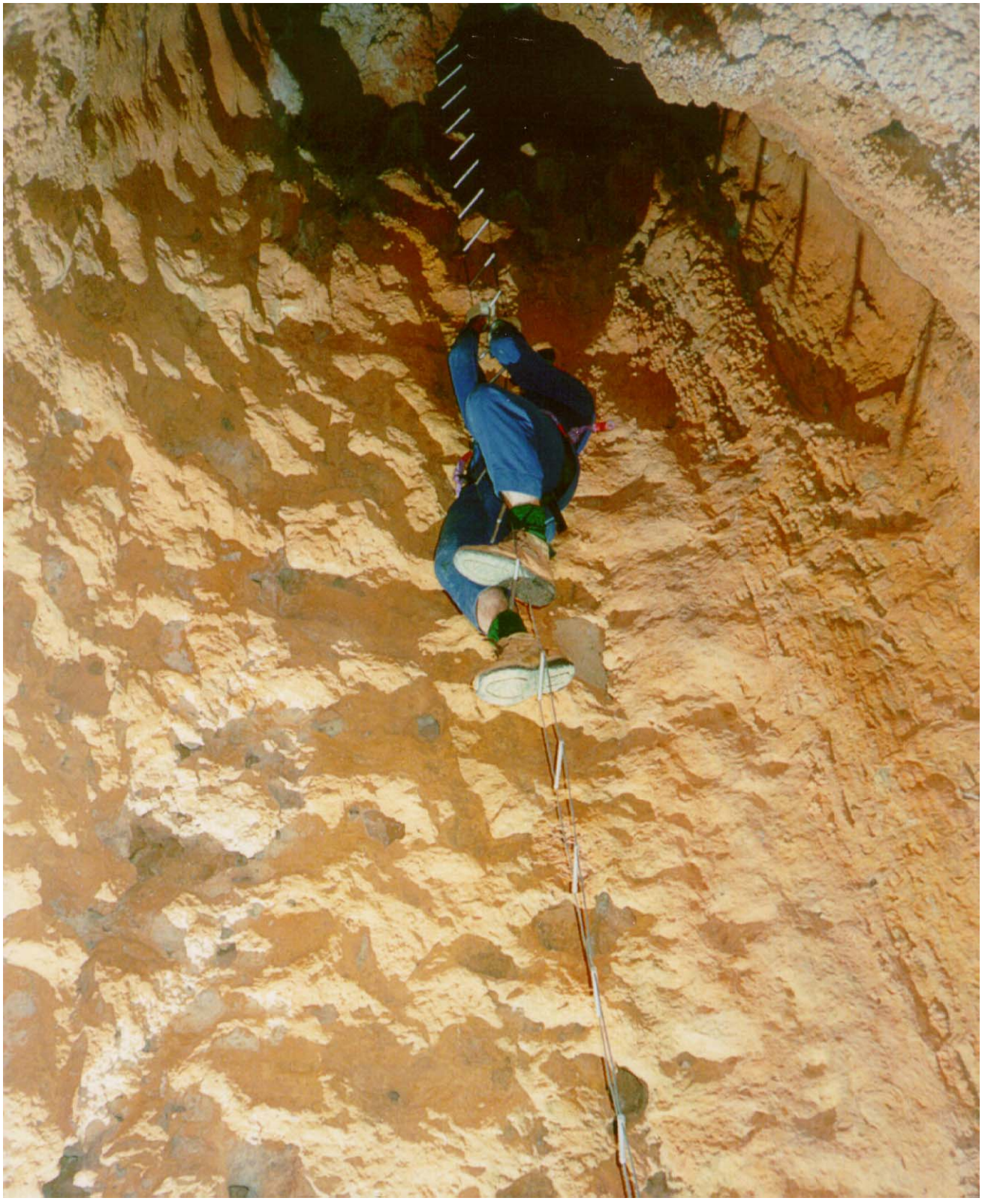
CEGSA NEWS

Newsletter of the Cave Exploration Group (South Australia) Inc.

Volume 54 Number 3 **Issue 215** **AUGUST 2009**



CAVE EXPLORATION GROUP (SOUTH AUSTRALIA) Inc.

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http://www.cegsa.org.au

Meetings held on the fourth Wednesday of each month, except December, at 7.30 PM usually in the Royal Society of South Australia meeting room, Natural Science Building, South Australian Museum.

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Cover Photograph: Ray Gibbons descending 'The Silo' (N-3713).
Photo: Peter Ackroyd, 8 October 2005.

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QUARTERMASTERS NOTE.

High usage equipment will now be stored at the quartermaster's residence. Please make arrangements with the QM well in advance of required date for equipment. The QM can be contacted at the telephone numbers on the previous page.

NEWSLETTER MATERIAL

The deadline for copy for Volume 54 Number 4 (Issue 216) is Wednesday **11th NOVEMBER 2009**. Material not meeting this deadline may be retained for possible use in a following issue. The preferred method is via E-MAIL to atholjax@adam.com.au as an attachment or on CD or 3.5" IBM floppy disk, in Word or ASCII text format. Do not embed photos in text; send as separate files with notes where to put photos. Photos are preferred to be in colour (jpg format). Of course other forms of communication will still be gratefully accepted.

PRESIDENTS SPOT

In the last year or so, I have been pleasantly surprised at the number of trip reports being presented at General Meetings, so much so that these have, on occasions, gone on for longer than the rest of the meeting. One of the difficulties in keeping up this level of activity is the shortage of good caving options for day trips from Adelaide. While Sellicks Hill, Corra Lynn and Punyelroo are worth a visit from time to time (or more frequently in the case of Corra Lynn), it is hard to sustain interest in such day trips just by casual visits to these caves alone.

When I was living in the UK many years ago, the discovery of new caves, or new cave passage, was a not infrequent occurrence and did much to promote enthusiasm for caving at that time. These new discoveries did not happen just by poking around, as all of the easy finds had already been made by previous generations of explorers. Rather, they came about because various dedicated individuals would spend months at a time digging every weekend and sometimes on weekdays as well. Here in South Australia too, many of our best discoveries have come about in a similar way. So it was nice to hear, at the last General Meeting, of another exciting dig and perhaps imminent breakthrough in Corra Lynn, which had its length nearly doubled as a result of a similar exercise many years ago. The two roadside caves at Sellicks Hill have also been subject to some extremely persistent excavations, and although they have yet to reach the extensive master caves that no doubt lie below, they are already significant and deep holes. Many of the caves at Naracoorte have enticing breezes that promise much more than what is currently known. So what better way to keep CEGSA active than for us all to show the same dedication to finding new stuff that our predecessors (and some of our older contemporaries!) showed in discovering those favourite caving haunts that we take for granted today.

Mark Sefton.

TRIP REPORTS

Circumambulating on the Nullarbor Plain, October 2005

by Peter Ackroyd

Trip dates: 2 – 21 October 2005

Party: Peter Ackroyd and Ray Gibbons.

Introduction

This, another of our regular Nullarbor trips, was to be a 'mop-up' trip.. We planned to have another go at finding N-28, a blowhole recorded in January 1960, unfortunately now lost. We also wished to carry out a scouting trip from the South Australian side into the Western Australian side of the Nullarbor, and to locate and tag some temporarily numbered features logged by aircraft a few years ago (NXK features), in the Western Australian part.

The Continuing N-28 Saga

We left Adelaide on Sunday 2 October 2005 arriving around 7:30 pm to stay the night at Max and Hennie Meth's place in Ceduna. The following day we drove west to the Koonalda area to resume our search for N-28. My researches of the CEGSA records six months earlier (Ackroyd 2009B) had indicated that, contrary to popular opinion, N-28 had a well described location. Moreover, again contrary to previous assumptions, N-28 was not the same feature as QW-174, a blowhole recorded by Harry Wheeler on 21 January 1961, and well described by him. After plotting the described locations of both N-28 and QW-174, I found that the location given for N-28 was 4.5km west-north-west of that given for QW-174.

In late March 2005 Ray and I had carried out a preliminary search for N-28 in this new, proper location, without success (ibid). We now carried out a more thorough search, during which Ray found an old east-west track that we were able to follow for about 3km before it petered out. Tracks in the Nullarbor, even well used ones, can disappear within a couple of decades. In this instance, we had to contend with 4½ decades.

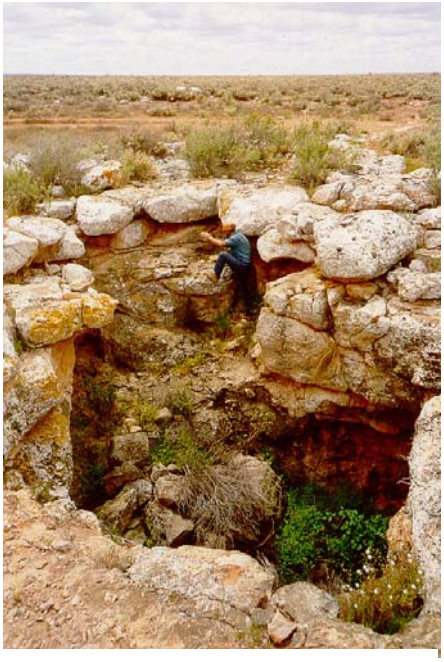
We felt we were close to finding N-28, but again were without success.

On to the NXKs

On 4 October, we joined the MC Track, a recently discovered good-quality track crossing to the Western Australian part of the Nullarbor (Ackroyd, 2009A). Amazingly, while on this track, one that we had used twice already, we found a blowhole quite close to the track — you can never be quite sure you've covered everything. We tagged this blowhole N-3701.

Once we reached the WA/SA border, we travelled south along the border track, finding it to be of remarkably good quality We turned west towards N-139, 'Seeping Cave' located on the Eucla-Reid Road. Once there we found that the supposed tag was missing. So, we applied a new one and did some additional data collection and exploration.

We then headed further west checking a whole series of temporarily numbered NXK features logged from the air a few years previously. Most of these were the remnants of a whole suite of NXK points that other parties had already picked the eyes



Ray Gibbons climbing down into Seeping Cave (N-139).
Photo: Peter Ackroyd, October 2005.

out of (ie all the interesting sounding ones had been looked at and numbered). However, someone had to finish off the job properly, so …

On the top of a 15m high, north-south fault scarp we found N-3706 (was NXK-679). This turned out to be a massive series of at least 20 rockholes with many chert tools, some quite large, and a nicely laid out line of pointer stones. Near the centre of the area we found a recently opened blowhole, which we tagged N-3707. The entire complex was located within a shallowly depressed 180 x 130 metre pavement area. Our past experience with rockhole complexes had helped us here — many of the very best are located on the top edges of the set of fault scarps running across the Nullarbor. Despite the dry conditions at the time of our visit, some of the rock holes were moist. The nearby cave N-3711, which we named 'Hidden Water Cave', contained a small lake.

Our daily routine followed the same pattern as earlier trips. Each morning, after breakfast, Ray would set off on a 'karst walk', while I downloaded and recorded our previous day's work, including photo tags, into my notebook computer. Ray would return around mid-morning with new features he had found. These were the first features we recorded and tagged for the day. We would then continue our task of locating and recording all NXK points we found, allocating them 'N' numbers. Sometimes these 'features' turned out to be large rabbit warrens or animal dens (foxes or cats mostly) or sometimes just a stretch of bare pavement.

At nightfall we found a flat place to camp, pitched our tents, cooked a meal, had a couple of drinks and fell into bed.

We followed this pattern of joining up the NXK dots for the rest of the trip. The 2005 rainfall had been reasonable, but now that it was October the land was drying out. Most days we saw a couple of kangaroos, occasionally red kangaroos, but mainly western greys. What we particularly noticed on this trip was an increase in the number of camels. Often herds of 6 or 10 hove into view where previously, especially this far south, we had seen few or none at all.

One of our typical Nullarbor camps.
Photo: Peter Ackroyd, October 2005.

The last of the wildflowers were still showing themselves. *Frankenia* was still relatively common in the claypans. Occasionally *Scaevola spinescens* was spotted, and the delicate *Thysanotus tuberosis* (fringed lily). Rarest of all in the dry conditions was *Ptilotus obovatus* (silver mulla mulla).

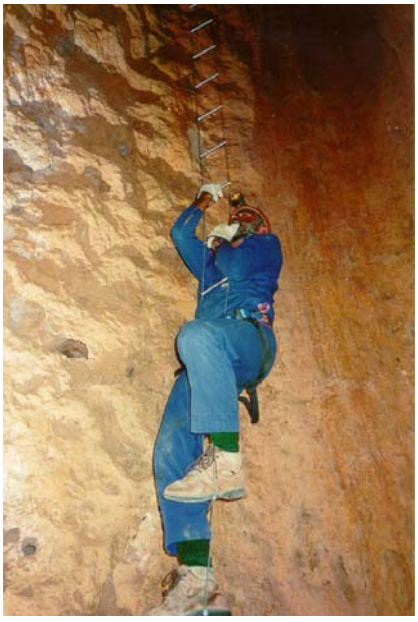
A Nice Surprise

One of the gems missed by the other parties turned out to be NXK-680, which we tagged N-3713 and named 'The Silo'. This innocuous-looking feature turned out to have three holes connecting to a rather large shaft that require the linking of two ladders to plumb its depths.

Regrettably, the clean washed gravel floor would not permit further progress, but the joy of exploring such a spacious clean drop was enough for us.

After that rather pleasant interlude the 'dross' came to the fore. We checked many features that had NXK numbers, but which subsequently turned out to be nothing more than rabbit warrens or, occasionally, animal dens.

Even so, a gem can pop up out of nowhere. About 700m northeast of N-3725 (a simple blowhole with a 9m long cave), we found a rarity. This was a 15mm diameter, well-rounded, orange quartzite river pebble. Every now and then one receives a



Ray Gibbons in 'The Silo' N-3713.
Photo: Peter Ackroyd,
8 October 2005.

reminder that rivers once flowed across the surface of this arid karst landscape. We left the river pebble in situ.

Two kilometres to the east was a smallish claypan, about 300m in diameter. Plumb in the centre of the claypan was a collapse leading to a short cave that we tagged N-3728. The cave contained recent flood debris, including a log from an acacia, and some calcite decoration. Several other karst features found in the immediate area confirmed the presence of an ancient southward trending river course; a paleochannel. One of those nearby features was N-3732, 'Drowned Bird Cave', which contained a small lake with the eponymous drowned bird.

Not all discoveries were happy ones however. On 12 October, right on sunset, a razor rock discovered our tyre. We immediately changed over the wheel, using one of our five spares, and travelled a short distance to a flat spot on which to camp.

First thing on the following day we attempted to repair the tyre, but the slash was too severe to be patched. We then drove north to Old Homestead Cave to have a rest day at the hut there. We found four UK cavers/researchers in residence there, one of whom, Rob Davies, we had already met six months previously (Ackroyd, 2009B).

Mark Harwood, Rob Davies, Stefan Doerr, Alex Lewis and Scintrex CG-3M Microgravity Meter at Old Homestead Cave hut.
Photo: Peter Ackroyd, 15 October 2005.

Rob was co-leader of a British research team using a microgravity meter to plot profiles over known caves and over possible sites for new caves in order to assess the device's usefulness in predicting new cave locations in the Nullarbor.

Rob was very pleased to see us. He required information on the Nullarbor's terrain for logistical purposes and was also seeking suitable locations to try out the microgravity meter. The device can find places in the earth's crust where rock isn't, otherwise known as caves. His original contact for this purpose, Graham Pilkington, had unexpectedly pulled out of the trip so our serendipitous appearance on the scene was welcomed.

Ray Gibbons repairing tyres at Old Homestead Cave hut.
Photo: Peter Ackroyd, 14 October 2005.

Consequently, we extended our stay at the hut for an extra day. In that time we advised the British team on how best to traverse the Nullarbor and the hazards likely to be met. We also provided them with precise locations of sites we believed would be good places they could search for potential new caves and suitable places to calibrate their equipment. In addition we also cleaned ourselves up, baked some bread and repaired our vehicle's tyres.

On 15 October, we prepared to go looking for more NXK features. The British lads also started packing, ready to look at the features we had told them about and to look at some topographic anomalies north of the Trans line that they had spotted from satellite images. We were able to provide them with a fair bit of breakfast cereal, of which they had virtually none, and some canned goods to bulk out their rather lightweight larder. We headed out early, travelling about 15km north-east to the link track, north of which were many unchecked NXK points, and started work.

The following day about 6mm of rain fell. This was enough to make travel difficult, so, we headed up to high ground and sat it out. By the afternoon the ground was dry enough to drive on, so we recommenced work. We saw many more camels up here, up to 16 in one herd, and noticed that nearly all trees and shrubs in the region were heavily browsed.

We headed south on 19 October to the Link Track where we were astonished to see a hairy nosed wombat ambling about in broad daylight. We then headed east to the Eucla-Reid Road, where we made camp.

The following day we made it out to Eucla for showers and then some highway travel towards Ceduna. Late on 21 October we were back in Adelaide.

Appendix: Listing of features examined and karst numbers allocated

New 'N' numbers allocated, tagged and documented:
5N-3701, 6N-3702–3771 (Total = 71).

Existing 'N' numbers visited, data collected and feature tagged (when no tag found):
6N-139, 6N-1887, 6N-2200, 6N-2032, 6N-2033, 6N-2034 (Total = 6).

Temporary 'NXK' numbers visited and 'N' numbers allocated (where applicable): NXK-55 (rabbit warren), 56, 57, 105 (rabbit warren), 140, 141, 143 (rabbit warren), 225, 226 (rabbit warren), 227 (rabbit warren), 228 (pavement only), 229, 230, 231, 232, 240, 241, 248, 249, 458 (rabbit warren), 459 (rabbit warren), 470 (rabbit warren), 475, 499 (rabbit warren), 501 (rabbit warren), 502 (rabbit warren), 504, 505 (rabbit warren), 506 (animal den), 517, 559 (rabbit warren), 560 (animal den), 563 (rabbit warren), 564 (rabbit warren), 568 (rabbit warren), 569 (rabbit warren), 570 (rabbit warren), 573, 574, 575, 584, 585, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 618 (rabbit warren), 634 (rabbit warren), 635 (rabbit warren), 636, 670, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 712 (rabbit warren), 713 (rabbit warren), 721 (rabbit warren), 747 (rabbit warren), 754 (rabbit warren), 922, 943 (rabbit warren) (Total = 65).

All our cave information was entered into the CEGSA Karst Index (KIDSA) in late 2005 and so is accessible to all cavers.

References

Ackroyd, Peter, (2009A) A Two State Nullarbor Trip — October 2004. *CEGSA News* **213 (Vol 54 No 1)** pp. 4–8

Ackroyd, Peter, (2009B) A Very Social Nullarbor Trip — March/April 2005. *CEGSA News* **214 (Vol 54 No 2)** pp. 34–38

Peter Ackroyd, 14 August 2009

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THREE DAY ODYSSEY FROM CEDUNA

(who's interest in karst features is in local wells and rock holes)

Date of trip: Wednesday 8th to Friday 10th April, 2009.

Participants: George and June MacLucas, CEGSA.
Murray & Margaret Collins of Ceduna.

Sites Visited:
Googs Track R/H. (Cegsa) 5E83
Manandilla R/H.(Cegsa) 5E81
Bookabie / Pockerby R/H. (Cegsa) 5E82
Merghiny R/H (Cegsa) 5E80
Chillundie R/H (Cegsa) 5E79
) These location have all been allocated new numbers. Some were X Numbers from previous visitation by Max Meth.

Also visited Waranda Well
Chillundie Well
Warradile old farm man made underground well.
Warradile old farm cellar

A week before our proposed and arranged trip to the Nullarbor with VSA cavers, Murray Collins a local Ceduna farmer offered to take both June and myself to local rock holes and wells within the vicinity all on private properties. Distances varied from 50km north of Ceduna, 100 km west of Ceduna and 40 km east of Ceduna.

It was wonderful to be with Murray, who knew exactly where to go with no worries about driving through private property (including one site located on his own property). He showed a sincere interest in helping to document all these sites.

Wednesday 8th April.
Visited Googs Track Rock Hole 5E83. This site had four holes in a row but only three held water.

Googs Track Rock Hole 5E83.
Photo: June MacLucas.

Thursday 9th April.
Manandilla Rock Hole 5E81. Max Meth and Murray Collins located this rock hole a few years ago. Murray informed us it had been difficult to locate as the owner of the property had placed a wire frame over the top of the rock hole and then filled it with dirt making it impossible to see. Later Murray and Max with land owner's approval cleaned it out. On the day of our visitation we found it contained water. Previously tested it was found to hold 130 litres of water.

Manandilla Rock Hole 5E81.
Photo: June MacLucas.

Bookabie Rock Hole 5E82, also know as Pockerby Rock Hole. Once again Max Meth and Murray located this rock hole a few years ago when it was tested to hold 270 litres of water. At our visitation this rock hole was dry.

Bookabie Rock Hole 5E82.
Photo: George MacLucas.

Merghiny Rock Hole 5E80.
Photo: June MacLucas.

Friday 10th April.
Merghiny Rock Hole 5E80. Murray located this rock hole in November 2008. Originally it was noted by early explorer and surveyor Ellison in 1866 or 1867. Location of this rock hole was lost for over a hundred years, then Murray checked with locals but still it was not located until he found it last year from Ellison's own written descriptions of location.

Chillundie Rock Hole 5E79. This site has a star dropper in each of the three rock holes found within the rock pavement. These rock holes were first mentioned in early land maps in 1870, stating only two holes contained 250 gallons (1100 litres) of water. Later when Murray located these rock holes on his own property, he found there were not two holes, but three.

Chillundie Rock Hole 5E79.
Photo: June MacLucas.

Murray also took us to Waranda Well, Chillundie Well, and an abandoned Warradile farm that contained an old cellar and a

man made underground well. These were interesting sites as it showed how the early farmers dealt with water conservation.

Since this trip, Murray has informed us that; he has since located two more lost rock holes. We plan to visit these sites with him next year.

George MacLucas

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FOUR DAY TRIP FROM PORT LINCOLN TO FOWLERS BAY.

Date of trip: Wednesday 15th to Saturday 18th April, 2009.
Participants: George & June MacLucas – CEGSA.
Caves Visited: Elliston Cave – 5E15, Woolshed Cave – 5E17, The Tub – 5E18.

After our trip with local farmer Murray Collins from Ceduna who took us to several rock holes and water holes within the local vicinity, we continued down to Port Lincoln where we stayed several days with our grandson Aaron. We had one week before we had to meet up with the VSA cavers to take part in an approved scientific trip of three weeks on the South Australian side of the Nullarbor while searching for new features. As we travelled back to Ceduna via the Flinders Highway we decide to stop and take a look at the various coast line caves in the Talia area.

George at entrance to Elliston Sea Cave 5E15.
Photo: June MacLucas.

June in Woolshed Cave 5E17 (Talia Cave).
Photo: George MacLucas.

1st night 15th April, we slept at Yangie Bay, Coffin Bay Reserve. This area has great camping facilities with terrific views of the coast line. Out of curiosity we stopped and checked out the Yangie Well in this area.

2nd day 16th April, visited Elliston Sea Cave 5E15. A single chamber cave with a good view of jetty and headland from inside the cave.

Just up from Elliston, we visited the Talia area where we visited the tourist cave of Woolshed 5E17 (also known as Talia Cave). This cave is quite picturesque as it has a weakened joint in the sandstone caused by the destructive action of the waves that has formed the cave. The roof of the cave is composed of much younger limestone which covered the rocks in the past. With sea levels rising since the last ice age, this limestone has also been severely eroded leaving a similar elongated form running through the length of the cave at roof level.

The Tub 5E18.
Photo: June MacLucas.

While in the Talia area we visited the Tub 5E18. This site proved to be a surprise, as we had visited this area before, but had never looked at the Tub. The thin layer of younger limestone comprising the roof has been eroded to such an extent, that it has collapsed. The collapsed ceiling has formed a bowl shape 20 metres

diameter by approx., 5 metres deep. At high tide, the sea water flows into the bottom of the Tub through a narrow gap in the cliff face of this site.

Continuing north we visited Cooeyana Well, an historic site off the Flinders Highway. This well was an important water supply for the Nauo, Wiranju and Kakatha people as well as early explorers, such as Edward John Eyre.

Eyre used this depot for his first expedition to the region in 1839. He also used this site as a base camp when he returned in 1840 to make his famous expedition from Port Lincoln around the Great Australian Bight to King George Sound in Western Australia.

By this time it was getting late and we found ourselves at a camping site off the main highway at Haslam. I mention this camping site as we found it much cheaper yet quite serviceable than any other camping spot along the Flinders Highway. During the night we were talking to an ex fisherman who was obviously very proud of his 'knot' prowess and was interested when I mentioned our use of a 'prussik' knot. The following morning the fisherman was at our tent doorstep with a piece of rope in hand asking for a demonstration of this unheard of knot in his vocabulary. He was so happy; he told me where to purchase some cheap fresh oysters before we left the camp site.

3rd night 17th April, stayed at Ceduna with Hennie, Max Meth's wife. Max is still in Philippines and is expected home in December this year. We left the next day and travelled onto Fowlers Bay where Edward John Eyre established a base camp in the sand hills in 1841 when he then embarked on his westward exploration.

4th night 18th April, slept at Scott Bay, ten kilometres into sand hills after Fowlers Bay. A terrible corrugated road for seven kilometres, then tall sand hills, but the sunset that night was one of the best we have ever seen.

Normally over the years we have always been in a great rush to arrive on time at the selected meeting place on the Nullarbor for the upcoming proposed caving trips. This little unrushed look at a small section of the Eyre Peninsula was a pleasure. Retirement has its benefits.

George MacLucas

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VSA 2009 SCIENTIFIC TRIP TO THE NULLARBOR
(A short overview)

This report covers only one small section of data collected as each day cavers were sent in different directions, often in different vehicles to designated sites according to the data handout. Other cavers will sort out their sites visited and eventually it will be collected together and recorded fully. All findings of new karst features will be handed into the National Parks and CEGSA records by trip organizers and data collectors – Daryl Carr and Nicholas White.

Trip period for
George & June 19th April - 8th May 2009.

Participants; Ken Boland - VSA. Flightstar pilot.
Christine Dempsey – Ken's sister a strong bush walker.
Nicholas White – VSA. Puncture repairer extraordinaire.
Susan White – VSA. Organiser extraordinaire.
Margaret James – VSA. Camp worrier.
Daryl Carr – VSA. Data organizer.
Greg Leeder – VSA . Assistant for all mechanical needs and excellent cook.
Dennis Marsh – Orange NSW. Snake catcher & small hole Gopher.
Ian Curtis – Orange NSW. Self imposed dish washer & old car wreck buff.
Ian Lutherborrow – Sydney. No holes too small. Mentor for June/free climbing.
Cathy Brown – ACT. Meticulous data recorder.

John Taylor – Kempsey NSW. Good surveyor.
Henry Shannon – Tasmania. Fussy surveyor.
George MacLucas – CEGSA. Belayer when needed.
June MacLucas – CEGSA. Used for many tight squeezes.

This particular camp site was chosen last year May 2008 by George MacLucas for Ken Boland while returning from a trip to Daisy Bates old camp site at Ooldea SA. That particular trip also included retracing explorer Richard Maurice's tracks on the South Australian side in the late 1890's organised by Peter Ackroyd and local farmer Murray Collins of Ceduna.

This camp site was selected for the landing of Ken's Flightstar ultra lite plane. Requirements were grassy plain, no blue bush, no salt bush, no rocks, need to be flat and suitable for a large camp. Ken was delighted with our choice.

Ken Boland in 'Flightstar'.
Photo: June MacLucas.

For the whole of the first week, we were all plagued by thousands of little small flies that were like bees swarming around everyone requiring us to wear fly nets. Then 'Eureka' the temperature dropped to 2 degrees Celsius and the fly level was decimated but not fully removed. At last fly nets could be removed.

To give you some insight as to how these large groups work; the first two days passed slowly fighting flies while we waited for Ken to take off and collect flight data which he lists as 'K' numbers. It is then put into a data base and printed out showing both known and new GPS tracks listing the various sites, be it travelling by vehicle or foot. This info is updated and downloaded after each new flight undertaken by Ken.

This time consuming downloading of information has been improved since previous trips, usually left to Daryl Carr who on this occasion trained some new recruits that include John Taylor, Denis Marsh and Cathy Brown enabling split shifts on alternative nights.

With the larger group that we had this time, three different cars with five to a vehicle would go out each day to cover the different areas from flight path data.

One task our particular group had to undertake was to track along the old, old Cook road section in order to avoid making new tracks in this area (only one puncture). In another area George had to belay six people into a single chamber for surveying purposes; two abseiled, four laddered the descent (7 metres) while he found a comfortable rock to belay from. June was called on a number of times for our group to be the gopher for the tight blow hole entrances, some with leads off in various directions.


June entering a Blow Hole.
Photo: Darryl Carr.

From the seventy or so blow holes that June and I took part in documenting with our group, I mention only three new features to give a small window of what went on. Therefore, 5N4519 in which June had to stretch and straddle the wall to get down to the bottom for measuring purposes and found several small leads that she checked out finding some bird roust and scats. Meanwhile, Daryl was taking photos at the top, George handling the marker board, Margaret taking surface

measurements and Cathy recording the data. 5N4520 was a very large area of rocks in a clay pan. Several blow holes that were small but go no where, some under cap rock. Only one big enough for George to put his head in, lots of camel footprints. 5N4605 had a large rock at entrance overlapping, June was worried it was not stable, we found it OK but she had to twist herself to get in, it was 3.3 metres deep with two passages off 1m wide and 2m high but only went 3 metres.
At times we changed drivers and passengers sharing the different areas we needed to search. At least twice we all grouped together to spend a full day exploring large caves that Ken noted as particularly interesting, this will be reported on later when the data has been fully checked. Each evening there would be an exchange of events of the day shared while enjoying interesting and often enthusiastic meals prepared by various members of the group.

The big difference we all felt with this trip; we saved time as we did not need to secure aluminium tags to the features, just GPS recording of location, taking photographs of the sites with marker boards stating date with CEGSA numbers for records as requested by CEGSA records keeper Graham Pilkington. As it has been observed that many old tags from the past have gone missing from a number of features.

As the camp was only 40km from Cook, June and I visited the family who live and work there, Iva and Jan Holberton whom we meet last year on our way back from Ooldea. Both Jan and Iva made all of us welcome and offered a spare house for showering for all camp members at any time which all members gratefully used at various times.

Jan and Iva also arranged a B.B.Q night to celebrate June's birthday and Jan generously made her both a chocolate birthday cake and a plate of cream puffs. With all camp members attending, the population of Cook multiplied five fold. The group presented June via Ian Curtis; a 'special' sign from an over turned 1959 wrecked Holden Special found on the old Cook track for a 'special person'.

On the local flora while checking out an old 'rabbitos' camp, we found Ruby and Orange salt bush that were in fruit, they were sweet and tasty. These particular salt bushes usually grow under native willow trees. Many of the areas we visited were covered in small white Daisy plants that were out in full bloom. Cathy Brown was fascinated by these daisies and took a photograph of each area we came upon.

In the reptile mantel, I had my first sighting of a young Prong-snouted Blind Snake.

We also recorded locations of many active Wombat burrows that Nicholas White will present to National Parks in his final summary report of this trip.

We did not stay to the very end of the trip due to a necessary arranged appointment back in Adelaide; we left five days before the camp packed up. Since then we have been informed that the others were very successful in locating several more large new features. The Nullarbor goes on and on.

George MacLucas

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Corra Lynn Cave, 30 May 2009

Party: Paul Harper (L) and Graham Pilkington

Paul and I took up different tasks for the day. I tested out the new type-LN trolley by clearing out 4 of the dirt constrictions along the Alberta. Two of these are now crawling-sized. This new trolley requires the same width of tunnel as me thereby reducing dirt-removal to a minimum. It also fits along all the Alberta without having to be taken apart.

Graham Pilkington

Corra Lynn Cave, 20 June 2009

Party: Graham Pilkington (L) and Stuart Reedman

A continuation of the dig at the Portal that was mentioned in the last NEWS. Another of the dirt constrictions along the Alberta was cleared using the new type-LN trolley, this time the next to last one just prior to the Portal. Exhausted diggers now have a much easier time exiting. It will also make Dreamland trips more inviting – see photo of the 0.3m high finished passage.

The type-LN trolley has similar features to the previous one – very flexible and low, with the removable dirt-trays forming the carriage. This design enables all four wheels to remain on the ground when travelling over uneven surfaces. It also means that the dirt does not have to be transferred from container to container which reduces the effort involved with excavation. The flexible frame allows for easier turning around bends so that it follows curved tunnels without needing constant realignment.

Making Alberta negotiable.
Photo: Stuart Reedman.

Progress in the dig was 0.1m of depth. Doesn't sound like much but we had to enlarge the Portal entrance tunnel again to make it less suicidal to exit. Luckily this is a dirt-filled slot. Shorter people and the more flexible can now pivot from head-first to feet-first to tackle the ever-increasing drop.

The next task was to remove the large rock slab that was hovering over the pit and threatening to slide down onto the digger. It had been left because it gave some stability to the dirt wall but on the last trip we discovered that we had to undermine it to continue the dig. A large sledge-hammer was transported in just for this task which was expected by me to take the rest of the day because Corra Lynn rock is very hard and heavy. Much to my surprise it was made of crystal! It was probably part of an old flowstone slab that can be seen halfway up the Portal. Being crystal and in an open area with enough room to swing a cat let alone a sledge-hammer, it disintegrated into manageable chunks within half an hour.

The rest of the time was spent removing the debris pile from around and under the space previously occupied by the rock, leaving little time to deepen the hole. But it's now 3-times bigger at the base of the dig with room to excavate. A pity that another ledge was found jutting out 0.4m from the wall into the workspace in the closing minutes of the day's efforts. Probing down the side of this ledge showed that it drops vertically at least 0.4m in soggy sticky clay. Next trip will have to start by yet again widening the trench which involves removing debris from the 1.5m high dirt wall from top to bottom then stabilising the new configuration.

The day was a productive if uneventful contribution to the Portal Dig in a 10½ hour trip.

Graham Pilkington

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Corra Lynn Cave, 27 June 2009

Party: Paul Harper (L) and son Ben, and Graham Pilkington

While Paul and Ben excavated a tunnel closer to the entrance – discovering several more metres of tunnel in the process – I took the opportunity to visit the Portal dig site.

My idea was to simply tidy up the place and prepare it for a team of diggers by doing any one-man tasks that would keep any other participants idle. First was to again enlarge and deepen the

Portal entrance tunnel because getting into it might prove difficult after the side wall of the dig was removed as had been shown to be necessary on the last trip. The side wall of the dig is also the step-down point at the entrance!

After that task was completed – at least enough to allow another metre off the top of the dirt side-wall to the removed – I started excavating the sticky clay from the bottom of the dig. I knew that this would be a slow job and while being done would leave other team members twiddling their thumbs or even taking naps. Not having any helper to remove the tacky stuff, I simply stuck the mud to the wall at the other end of the trench. It should be easier to remove from there rather than dig it from the floor like I was doing. After lowering the floor by 0.4m it became rocky with less clay. I even smelt that whiff of fresh air that sometimes occurs when opening up a pocket of trapped air in a confined space. The rocks became clear of clay very quickly, within 0.1m depth. At this time I also began to hear a welcome sound, that of pebbles dropping into a void!

Clearing away more of the blocking rubble a space opened up beneath me 0.4m along the wall and 0.1m across. Getting out a spotlight, I probed the black patch and also lowered a 3m long tape to measure the depth. What I saw was an open slot at least 4m deep and 0.4m wide of unknown length but over 4m. From my constricted view-point I couldn't see either end of the slot nor if any side tunnels existed but a pebble dropped into the slot produced that nice hollow sound that you get in larger chambers. Maybe it's just the vertical fissure reverberating like a drum but I can only hope for something much better. To open up the slot will require the removal of another slab of crystal rock that's wedged into the top (and prevented all that Portal debris from filling down below). The Portal fill above the said rock will also have to be removed to prevent it from descending before (or on top of!) us.

Unfortunately for my ego, it was obvious that the Portal had NOT been undermined by the 1944 flood as I had been postulating. The Portal slump had occurred a long time ago. All that the 1944 flood had done was to leak into the Portal (probably from a blocked tiny fissure that links across to the Wishing Well) and saturate the clay from below about 1m depth.

A good time to leave. Giving me lots of happy dreams of at last getting into the fabled Corra Lynn Basement without having to bother with reality. Reality has to wait for the next trip.

Graham Pilkington

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Corra Lynn Cave, 18 July 2009

Party: Graham Pilkington (L), Michael Woodward, Ian Lewis, Ray Gibbons and Stuart Reedman

This was going to be the breakthrough trip. It had to be after getting a digging team to drag themselves and the hauling and digging gear to the Portal. A revised type-LN trolley was used this trip. It has Y-chain clip-on links at the ends. This is an improvement when turning the trolley because the force exerted laterally increases rapidly as the trolley approaches a bend. Sliding the trolley sideways in this manner was considered preferable to using pivots because all moving parts and threads get jammed up by the sticky gritty clay of Corra Lynn. Even the wheels used have simple nylon spindle holes instead of the susceptible ball-race type.

Portal Dig in progress.
Photo: Stuart Reedman.

On my last trip I'd left the dig with a good looking hole in the floor and a hill of debris poised above it waiting to close it up again after someone was silly enough to stick their head down it. Not that a head would fit yet because of the large slab of crystal wedged in the fissure.

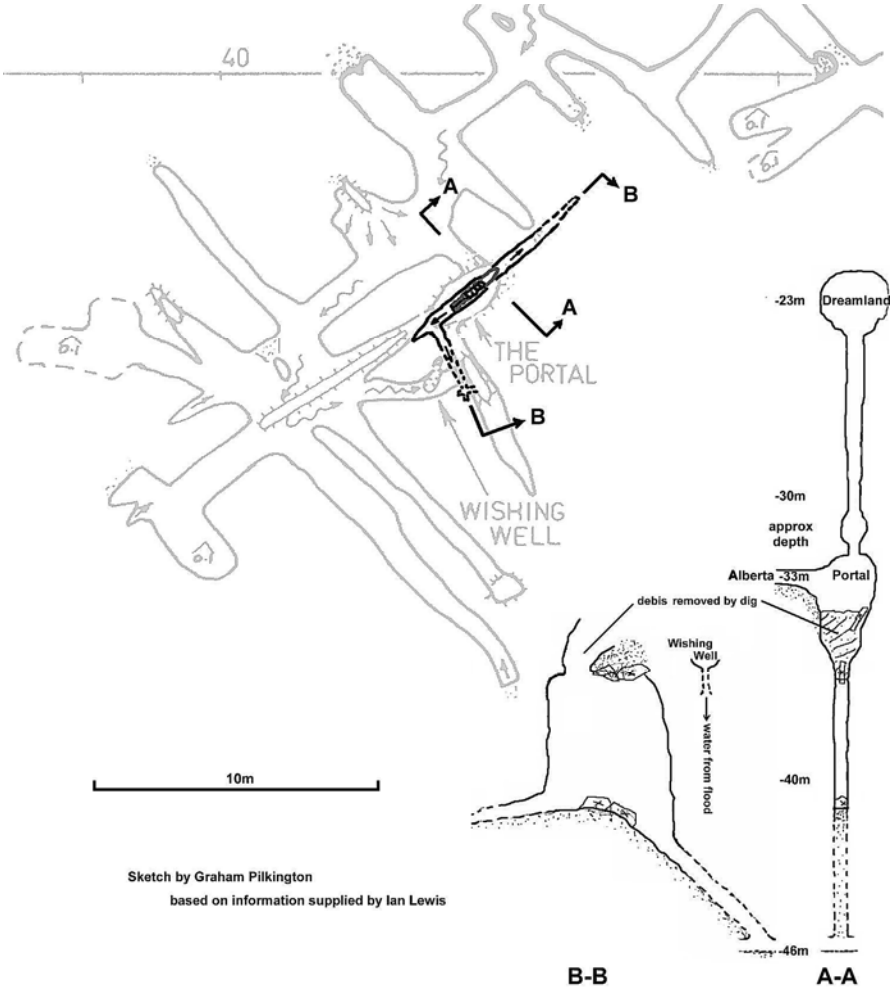
The team of 5 was just right for rapid removal of the dirt pile. Of course it was not always rapid with the bottom section being composed of sticky wet clay. I cleared off the top of the slab and down the sides before it was time for a break. During the break the dirt pile did a bit of self-stabilisation by collapsing into the hole that I'd just vacated, burying some of the digging tools. This made it much easier to decide how far back to excavate; all I had to do was dig down to the rock slab and excavate around it again.

The slab looked like it was suspended in mid-fissure, staying up where we were because it was uneducated about Newton's Laws. I broke off the top half metre and a third of that was just light enough to be lifted out. The difficulty was where to stand without descending down the fissure with the rest of it and everything else. A good time for me to "have a rest" and let someone else tackle it. Ian volunteered. After chipping off some of the lower section of the slab, Ian attempted to get down the fissure on the Portal ladder – extended with rope with loops in it. But no go. Either the hole was too small or Ian was too big.

One small step for man.
Photo: Stuart Reedman.

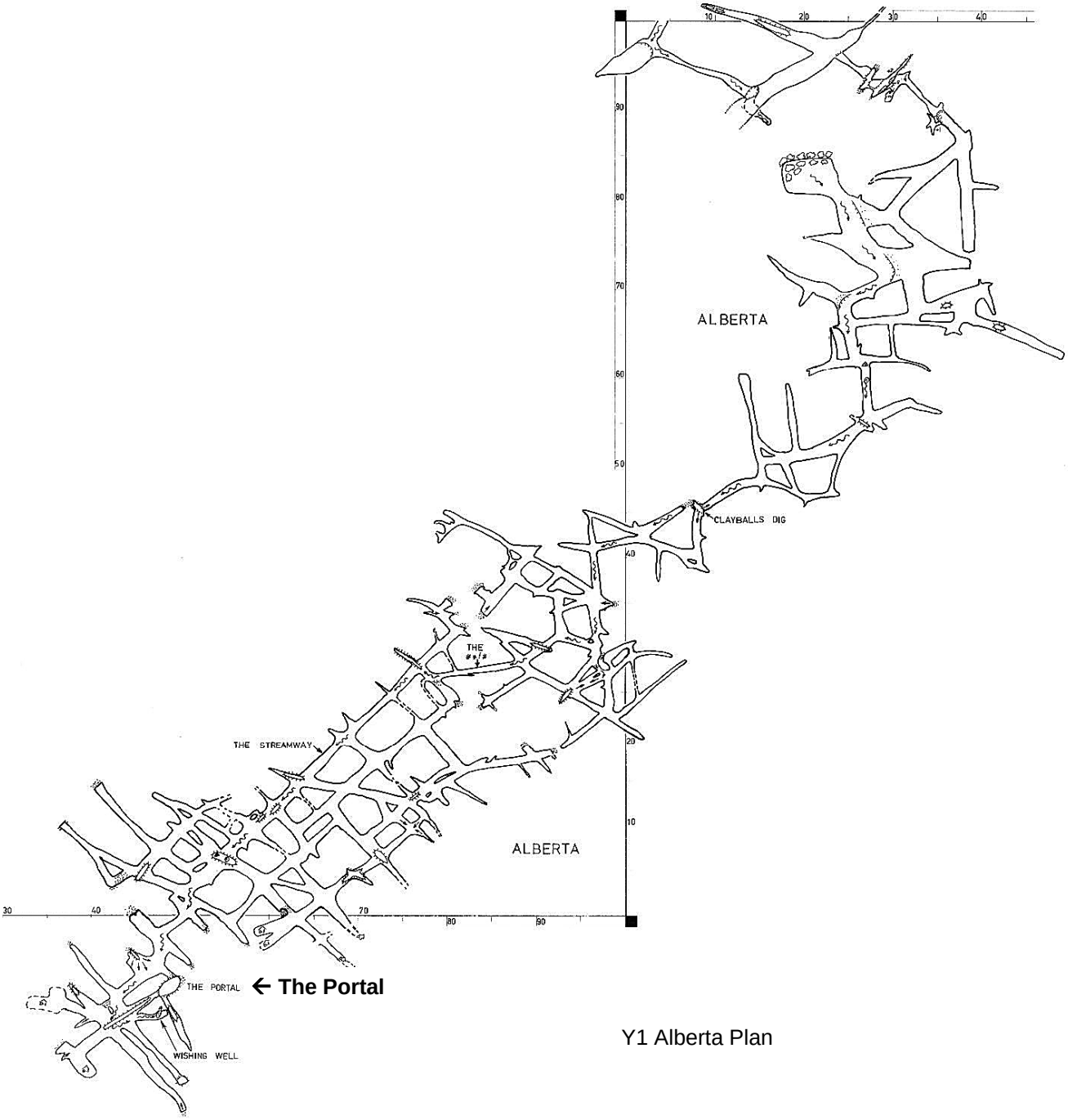
Having moved things around a bit, bashed chunks off the slab and removed some more tacky clay, the decision was made that there was plenty of room down below to take the slab and whatever else was needed to open up the hole. The pieces of slab and adjacent debris descended with a pleasing crash and left a gaping hole.

After ensuring that no more debris was likely to attend him on the way down, Ian quickly went to the bottom and looked around (on belay of course which he had been whilst digging, and stayed on belay whilst down there just in case the floor gave way). It was a 5m drop into a 10m long 0.4m wide fissure. A check on the Portal blockage showed that it was going to stay put, held in place by a pinch-point and two wedged boulders. The Portal opening is only a few metres long, pinching out both ways to form a solid roof with the usual central crack. Going SW, downhill, another fissure on the left is intersected. At about 7m below the pinch-point this becomes too small to continue, being nearly filled by soil on a 60 degree downhill slope for maybe another 3m depth. Total depth from the initial Portal dig level is about 12m, making this the deepest bit of Corra Lynn Cave.



Y1 Portal Dig Sketch.

While Ian was down there, Stuart went around to the Wishing Well to find out if it connected to the new extension. Neither Ian nor Stuart could see each other's



Y1 Alberta Plan

light. However, they could talk to each other without difficulty. In fact, the other three of us sitting above the Portal pit could not hear Stuart's voice via the Alberta – about 15m around a U-bend of tunnels – but could hear his voice as though he was with Ian down in the pit! After a bit of testing, we're certain that we've got into the tunnels below the Wishing Well and no longer have to contemplate how to enlarge the Wishing Well to human size.

Best of all, just before leaving the depths, Ian reported a breeze. We'd not had one all day but a faint one had just appeared at the same time at the Portal.

Getting Ian out of the smooth fissure turned out to be much more difficult than anticipated. The rope ladder's "rungs" were too far apart in the narrow space and Ian's arm strength was sadly lacking after a long day's dirt shifting. But with a combination of Ian climbing, Michael hauling on belay, and Stuart holding and lifting a pretend prussic foot loop, we did not have to exit to get a ladder from the car. At least we now know to take in a ladder (or more!) to continue into the Basement.

A warning to all cavers visiting Dreamland. It's no longer recommended to slide head-first out of the hole in the wall into the Portal pit. The floor is now 8m down not 1!

To relax after the breakthrough, Stuart left for home and those left excavated more dirt from the end tunnel in the Alberta tunnel access path.

The Portal Dig is complete. We're just about to start the Lower Wishing Well Dig! I was informed by my current digging team that "not next week" was a given. Something about needing time to recover from the non-stop 10 hour trip.

A good time to leave. Giving me more happy dreams of at last getting into the fabled Corra Lynn Basement without having to bother with reality. Reality has to wait for yet another trip.

Talking about another trip, I'm looking for volunteers for a trip on the 12 Sep to tackle the Lower Wishing Well Dig site. A minimum of 4 and a maximum of 7 people are required. I can guarantee that you won't be bored, there's plenty of dirt for all.

Graham Pilkington

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Sandgroper Adventures – Report from the WA Detachment of CEGSA

So what have the WA contingent of CEGSA (aka "the WASG Rejects") been up to? This brief report should bring you up to date with the discoveries and adventures we have had since abandoning the sinking ship and joining the CEGSA ranks in early 2008.

The team comprises Kym Hosie, Kim Halliday, Peter Rattigan, Suzanne, Luke, Craig and Paul. We have spent a lot of time documenting the coastal karst areas north of Perth lying between Lancelin and Dongara. The regions are formally identified as South Hill River, Jurien and Eneabba – covering a total of approximately 2,000 km2 of coastal Aeolian (Tamala) Limestone. We had a lot of research and work to do to identify and locate all the known karst features and this work continues for an ever-decreasing number of them. It is a poor reflection on WA cavers that the existing KID records are in such a poor state and have not been maintained or updated for decades. But that is good news for us and it has been a lot of fun wandering around the bush and meeting people with vast amounts of local area knowledge in the process. Once we had located and documented the large majority of the known features last year, it was time to start on the unknowns, the first of which was reported in Caves Australia Issue 176.

Since that small but humble discovery last year, we have documented over 70 previously unrecorded karst features ranging from blocked solution tubes and blind dolines to solution tube clusters and several highly decorated caves. We have also extended leads in several known caves and there is a tonne more to do. All very exciting stuff!

My beautiful wife Kym led the photography trip in Weelawadgi Cave in May 2008 and her photos of "The Barrier" were quite stunning. With the area being at its driest since the '99 floods, the opportunity was taken to visit ANU and Beekeepers Caves where the previously sloppy mud and half submerged passages are now completely dry and much easier to explore and survey. Some new side passage were discovered in them which were under water when the caves were mapped 45 and 30 years ago respectively. By surveying the caves now, we will be able to show them in a way not possible before.

Peter Rattigan has been the main cave discoverer, having now tuned his eye to the karst landscape. He has spotted several of our new caves including the most promising so far which he found literally by falling into it in early August this year!! Lucky he didn't hurt himself as it is a highly decorated cave fully adorned with active speleothems. We are yet to return to complete the exploration, mapping and trackmarking of this significant new cave, located within the Nambung National Park.

The benefits of being petite weren't lost on Suzanne in June this year when we lowered her down a muddy little rat hole at the known end of a cave at Eneabba. To this date she is the only person who has seen and explored a further 10m of phreatic tubeway passage which then begins to ascend into what looks like another chamber. With the rest of us now motivated to lose weight, it shouldn't be too long before we can get a couple people back in there to explore and map the new tunnels. This particular lead is very exciting because it is likely to change the whole understanding of the hydrology in the area. If the passage continues to the North as we hope it will, it could connect to a whole series of karst features in that direction.

Kim Halliday descends solution tube in 6E50.
Photo: Paul Hosie.

Although primarily a diver and cave diver, Kim Halliday has proven his mettle several times over pushing leads in dry caves, most notably in E63 Donna Cave in late July this year. He squeezed through a small hole at the furthest extent of the known cave to discover a beautiful chamber containing some dry speleothems including a 1m long stalactite – nice work!!

Another surprising discovery was that Craig Challen may have half a dry caving gene in him! In SH17 – Brown Bone Cave in early August this year, Craig was the only one of the group that was game enough to roof sniff all the way to the end of both the terminal branching tunnels. Not a likely diving prospect, but there are probably others out there.

Probably the most significant discovery we have made so far was on June 26th this year when I happened across a small sandy doline under a bush thicket in the Beekeepers Nature Reserve. The water all drained into a small cluster of solution tubes – lo and behold, one of them was big enough to access and dropped 3m straight down into a low roofed 30m wide x 1m high chamber. Crawlways lead to the three main chambers of the cave, the largest of which is 35m in diameter and 8m high.

6E100 New Cave, Calcified tree roots.
Photo: Paul Hosie.

6E100 New Cave, Mud Men.
Photo: Paul Hosie.

Virtually the entire chamber – ceiling, floor, walls and boulders are covered in multi-coloured speleothem deposits, the diversity of which is remarkable. In addition to the regular straws, stals and flowstones, there are pendulites, shawls (including one 3m long and 1m wide), moonmilk, cave coral, calcified tree roots, dogtooth spar crystal in gour pools, helictites, cave pearls and the fascinating soil heligmites which we refer to as 'Mudmen'. A low wide chamber at the furthest SE extent of the cave is notable for the number and size of the Mudmen it contains including some that are growing off the top of stalagmites. This unusual and beautiful place we have named the Mudmen's Palace.

Peter, Kym and myself were the privileged first to explore and photograph the cave on 27th June. Mike Newton and Kim Halliday joined me one week later to begin the survey of the cave and John Cugley helped set up the trackmarking in early August. Mike Newton has been caving in WA for over 30 years and his comment "that's the best decorated cave in the Eneabba area, better than Weelawadgi I reckon" is a great accolade. I think what makes it stand out from all the other caves in the area is the pristine condition of the speleothems which is so nice to see and our number one aim is to keep it that way.

The land manager (Mr Keith Hockey, DEC-Jurien) has been briefed on the discovery. Our intention is to complete the survey and trackmarking of the cave prior to submitting a report to the land manager with our recommendations for its future management. There is no doubt this is a significant discovery and the cave will probably be locked and added to the Caves Access Committee list. A separate,

more detailed report about the cave will be forwarded to CEGSA together with the map once it is completed in the next couple of months.

From what we have seen so far, there is no doubt that there is a lot more exploration to do in these beautiful karst areas of WA and your local CEGSA members are out there doing it. If you find yourself over this way, make sure you give us a call or drop us a line before you head over so we can organise some cool caving for you.

Paul Hosie

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Eneabba Caving Weekend – 7th to 9th August 2009

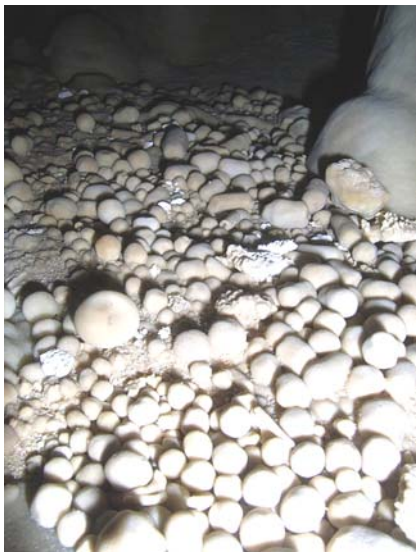
Group – John Cugley, Kym Hosie and Paul Hosie (TL)

John had travelled down from Kununurra so we spent the weekend showing him the new cave (E100) and doing some advanced social caving!!

Following a meeting with the Land Manager to discuss cave access and cave management issues for the area, John met us at DEC Jurien office from where we headed to the new cave – karst number 6E100 – Cegwa Cave. We had a stack of track marking materials – PVC pipe, 50x PVC caps, heavy nylon line and plastic tabs to hang off the nylon line. It took us about 5 hours to set up the track marking to the three different chambers which is now about 80% complete. Next trip we will finish this off and complete the survey ready for the final report to the land manager. We identified a track up to the Balcony in the CEGSA Chamber which offered stunning views of the floor there which

Kym Hosie heads into Cegwa Cave 6E100. Photo: Paul Hosie.

Balcony dry gour pools, Cegwa Cave 6E100. Photo: Paul Hosie.



Cave pearls in Cegwa Cave 6E100. Photo: Paul Hosie

Paul and Pete in Entrance Chamber, Cegwa Cave 6E100. Photo: Kym Hosie.

Shawl in Cegwa Cave 6E100. Photo: Paul Hosie.

comprises thousands of broken straws and small stalactites lying in dry gourpools. Despite the extent of the natural breakage, the ceiling over the whole area (approx 10m x 10m x 2m high) shows no sign of damage with an incredible density of yellow and white straws, stalactites and pendulites. Some of the straws were up to 1m long and a number of photos were taken.

We exited the cave about 5pm, happy with our work and John quite impressed with the find.

Weelawadgi Cave was entered Saturday morning 8th August with nothing unusual noted, the lock and gate being in good working order. We travelled slowly through to the Pool Room and it was noted along the way that drip holes forming on the edge of the marked path were susceptible to damage from normal pathway movement. The track marking was adjusted to accommodate these drip formations where possible but some additional track marking materials are needed to establish the path properly for the future.

On arrival at the Barricade, it was noted that the improvised direction signs and track marking from one side of the Barricade to the other was adequate but could be improved. It is recommended that the track marking be altered to eliminate any doubt as to which is the preferred track through the feature. This could be implemented with fishing line and reflectors so that movement is restricted to a single narrow path. Although there is room for improvement of the track marking in this area, it cannot be solely to blame for what we saw and photographed on the Pool Room side of the Barricade.

On the exit side of the Barricade, the track is clearly marked and follows the left hand wall up into the Pool Room. The reason for this is that the entire floor area on the right hand side of the path consists of dry white calcite flowstone, dry gour pools and stalagmites. It was apparent that people had walked all over this clean white formation wearing boots full of black soil, much of it being deposited on the formation. Visually tracing the prints back to their origin, it was clear that the dirt had been trod from the entrance side of the Barricade. The individuals responsible had gone off the path to go through the Barricade on the RHS of the passage and then around the dry gour pools and up over the flowstones. Some of the black soil deposited was in the shape of the boot tread from which it had fallen.

Although the Barricade track marking may have contributed to this problem, it is inconceivable that a caver permitted to be in the cave could have done this. Some of the bootprints were actually on the fragile rims of the gour pools and the individuals had ignored the track markers a few metres away and chose instead to walk up the flowstone.

To eliminate the possibility of unlawful access to the locked section of Weelawadgi Cave, it is recommended that the padlock be changed at the earliest possibility. It is further recommended that a clean up of the black soil as well as an upgrade of the track marking identified above be made in the near future. A CAC application has been submitted to do this work in early September so we will see what happens then.

After exiting the cave, we bushwalked in the area and discovered a previously unrecorded karst feature, being a small cluster of solution tubes, with good potential for a future dig. With a cave like Weelawadgi nearby (2700m+ of large, well decorated passages), the potential for discovery of new parts of this cave system is very enticing!!!

We had a great night staying with local friends, BBQ and beers, sharing our stories as they had located some new solution tubes that day as well – all good!

Our eternal enemy.
Photo: Paul Hosie.

Sunday morning we packed up and headed to the Jurien area where we located two previously unrecorded features, one a very large karst pavement feature with many solution tubes, several of them quite large but blocked a few metres below the surface. Some of the smaller tubes connected together in a small labyrinth 2m under the surface and funneled into a single drain point which dropped a further 3m down a tight fissure with

a slight draught coming from it. More work to be done there in future, though the feral beehives will have to be dealt with beforehand as they are extremely aggressive (or they just love me?!).

Drovers Cave was entered about lunchtime on Sunday 9th August. The track and route marking throughout the cave is quite poor and needs to be reconsidered. The track from the gate down to the base of the entrance chamber is ambiguous due a paucity of markers.

Many of the reflective markers in the bottom/end chamber were laying on the floor, covered by dirt and were ineffective. The route marking down to the large undecorated chamber to the North of the entrance takes the visitor directly through a low roof section containing some dry decoration. An alternate route to the left of this low section should be investigated to avoid this problem.

A full replacement and upgrade of the track marking systems used should be considered. Adapting the marking systems used in some of the LNNP Caves – PVC poles, heavy nylon line with properly positioned and visible reflective markers. This would adequately protect the formation regrowth and drip holes in the floor without limiting access to what is after all, a cave of significant proportion and historical value to the area (Noting that it is 'Drovers Cave National Park'!).

Although there are some minor new calcite deposits occurring in Drovers Cave, the overwhelming majority of the cave is so heavily vandalised that it is the opinion of both myself and Mr Cugley (both previous WASG Presidents and CAC Chairmen) that it is not appropriate for this cave to remain on the CAC List. Re-classification of the cave is recommended to align with DEC's Policy 18 s2.4.2: "Where appropriate, caves that have already been damaged by visitation should be selected as Tourist and Adventure Caves". We have offered the land manager that we will be happy to conduct a risk assessment and assist with development of a management plan for the cave. The cave is presenting a management problem to the land manager because people are routinely breaking into it requiring time and money to repair the damage caused each time.

With improvement to the track marking, the cave could readily be made available for low risk self guided visits as an Adventure Class 1 cave. Appropriate access arrangements, track marking and signage would be required to implement this approach. The ASF has funding available to support projects like this and this could be pursued if desired by the Land Manager.

We left the area, returned the keys and briefed the senior ranger on what we had found over the weekend. As the wildflowers are just starting to bloom In the area, our next trip should be terrific with the flowers in full bloom.

Paul Hosie

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Past Trips From General Meetings

PAST TRIPS FROM MAY GM.

1 **Ray Gibbons** and **Peter Ackroyd** have returned from a Nullarbor trip lasting a few weeks. A new SA cave was found to be well decorated, and at least 250m of it was surveyed, much of this was walking height tunnel. Depth is between 30 to 40m. Two weeks were spent in WA locating NXK features about 40km north of the Old Coach Road. 42 features were visited – most had large entrances but short caves. One had water. One could not be tackled because it was in excess of 17m deep – more than the gear available (another trip had borrowed the extra gear that would normally have been carried).

2 **George MacLucas**. A trip in 3 parts. First to an area of granite rockholes north of Ceduna. Then to Port Lincoln and the west coast of Eyre Peninsula visiting E17 and E18. Followed by joining up with the VSA on the Nullarbor trip south of Cook. There were 15 people. June was a gofa because of her small size. One cave found had a 40m diameter chamber with bones.

3 **Grant Gartrell** visited A25 on 24 May. The 4 involved excavated down a little-bit more.

4 **Grant Gartrell** went to the 100-strong ACKMA Conference 3-9 May in Margaret River, WA. Steve Bourne was re-elected as President. Brian Clark attended. Papers were presented in

the morning and the water-stressed caves were visited in the afternoon. A tour of Jewel Cave was led by the discoverer, Lloyd Robinson. The coastal springs are also drying up. Grant talked about a lost cave with a 15m drop into a large chamber with a lake

The next ACKMA Conference is at MULU in late April 2010. After that might be one in South Africa in 2012.

5 **Ian Lewis** was on the 4-day Latrobe Uni trip 7-10th May which was also attended by other CEGSA members who helped out in the caving part of the trip. It was part of Ruth Lawrence's "Regional Catchment Studies" course. The students had assignments to do during the trip including participating in a profile survey of VDC Cave. A letter was submitted by some of the students to Ruth after the trip requesting more caving trips as an extension to their course.

6 **Mark Sefton** gave a summary of a trip on 10th May to S102 and a mention of SOS being off-limits until the entrance has been stabilized.

7 **Ian Lewis** was involved with a Hamilton High School botany trip to the tourist caves at Naracoorte. They did a vegetation survey traverse over a Vic-Little Vic transect from limestone outcrop down to the creek.

8 **Neville Skinner** attended the Hunters Cave trip with 8 others. No surveying was conducted but much exploration in the now almost-dry cave. Extensions of 80, 25, and 25m were made.

PAST TRIPS FROM JUNE GM

1 The bat counting project on the June long-weekend in the south-east was attended by Ian Lewis, Fred Aslin, Kevin Mott, Graham Pilkington, Marie Choi, Mark Sefton and others led independent trips to several caves each on the Saturday. The Friends of Naracoorte Caves visited the caves around the Reserve and nearby. The lower south east count was about 11,000.

2 **Eddie Rubessa** went to the Flinders Ranges on the June long weekend and found some solution tubes that were mostly tight and vertical but one feature had walking tunnel and was wet.

3 **Ian Lewis** talked further on the bat-counting trip of June 6-8th.

4 **Peter Horne** talked on a trip to Glendene Park Cave that goes under the road near Little Blue.

5 **Peter Horne** expanded on a Hunters Cave trip mentioned last month to say that they also visited Sheathers Cave which was similarly lacking water, having no sumps left.

6 **Ian Lewis** and Kevin Mott went to Sleeping Cave in the cliffs of the Glenelg River on Sunday 7th June. Kevin was the one to volunteer to go by canoe and enter the cave – counting the bats was easy, there were none.

7 **Stuart Reedman** and Graham Pilkington continued the Portal Dig in Corra Lynn Cave on the 20th June. A lot of cave fill was moved and dig floor was greatly expanded but only 0.1m of depth was achieved. The new narrow trolley was used in excavating one of the dirt fills in Alberta.

PAST TRIPS FROM JULY GM

1 **Grant Gartrell** visited the Delamere area on July 19th. Water was pouring underground without backing up.

2 **Ray Gibbons** talked about the Corra Lynn Portal Dig of July 18th. This was expanded by **Ian Lewis** who presented chunks of crystal obtained from the dig and a sketch of the extension found.

3 **Mark Sefton** gave a summary of his recent trip to the 117km long Bullita Cave. Most work was in verifying and completing the survey of sections of the cave. They took forward and back sights at each station to prevent the majority of typical errors. Some participants went to the Spring Creek caves. It is anticipated that about 200km of cave passage will be the final total for the Gregory National Park.

TECHNICAL and OTHER ARTICLES

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome back to former members

Ian Charlesworth F 9008 12 Jackson Avenue STRATHALBYN SA 5255
(H) 8536-4705 (M) 0417-830-356
Sue Charlesworth F 9207 (E) ianch@dodo.net.au

Welcome to new member

Steven Maxwell A 0904 14 Megan Circuit NAIRNE SA 5252
(M) 0412-342-000 (E) madmax86@bigpond.com

MEMBERSHIP FEES

CEGSA MEMBERSHIP FEES became due on January 1st **AND ARE NOW OVERDUE** . Re-application for membership and the Joining Fee will be imposed in addition to the current fees.

CEGSA MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR 2009 YEAR

Full Membership	52.00
Full Country Membership	46.00
Associate Membership	44.00
Long Term Associate	52.00
3 Month Introductory	5.00
Joining Fee (N/A to 3mth Intro)	12.00
Discount for e-mail CEGSA News	15.00
Discount for Country Membership	6.00

ASF LEVY FEE FOR 2009 YEAR

Single	68.00
Family	121.50
3 Month Introductory	20.00
Student	61.00
Journal Subscription	25.00

2009 YEAR FEES

	CEGSA	+ASF	TOTAL
Full Membership	52.00	68.00	120.00
Full Country Membership	46.00	68.00	114.00
Associate Membership	44.00	68.00	112.00
3 Month Introductory	5.00	20.00	25.00

Variation for Family Membership

1st Full Member + 2nd Full Member Less \$16.00 for only 1 CEGSA NEWS	\$88.00	\$121.50	\$209.50
1st Full Member + 2nd Associate Member Less \$16.00 for only 1 CEGSA NEWS	\$80.00	\$121.50	\$201.50
1st Associate Member + 2nd Assoc Member Less \$16.00 for only 1 CEGSA NEWS	\$72.00	\$121.50	\$193.50

Discount for Country Membership and e-mail CEGSA NEWS applies for Family Memberships.

Please make sure your payment of fees includes CEGSA and ASF, if applicable.

Chris Gibbons.
Treasurer/Membership Officer.

Approved CEGSA Trip Leaders

Name	Caving Leader level
Marie Choi	Horizontal, Laddering and Vertical
Stan Flavel	Horizontal and Laddering
Grant Gartrell	Nil
Chris Gibbons	Nil
Amanda Grindley	Horizontal
Damian Grindley	Horizontal, Laddering and Vertical
Paul Harper	Horizontal, Laddering and Vertical
Richard Harris	Horizontal
Lance Hoey	Horizontal and Laddering
Peter Horne	Horizontal and Laddering
Paul Hosie	Horizontal, Laddering and Vertical
Peter Kraehenbuehl	Horizontal, Laddering and Vertical
Ian Lewis	Horizontal and Laddering
George MacLucas	Horizontal, Laddering and Vertical
June MacLucas	Horizontal
Steve Milner	Horizontal, Laddering and Vertical
Tim Payne	Horizontal, Laddering and Vertical
Graham Pilkington	Horizontal and Laddering
Phil Prust	Horizontal and Laddering
Eddie Rubessa	Horizontal and Laddering
Mark Sefton	Horizontal and Laddering
Gary Woodcock	Horizontal and Laddering
Michael Woodward	Horizontal, Laddering and Vertical

All the above named are also CEGSA Trip Coordinators.
Members may query the classification of any Trip Leader at any time with the committee.
It is a requirement that each trip be organised by an approved Trip Coordinator to be classed as an official CEGSA trip. It is also a requirement that dependent party trips be led by an approved Trip Leader at the appropriate skill level for the cave being entered.

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WEBSITE REQUEST

I intend to do some updating to the website during this year so I am appealing to members to let me know if they have any suggestions they would like to make about the website.
I would also like to update the gallery of photos so am appealing to members for photos they would like to see on the website. Dig out those wonderful photos you have taken and let the rest of the world see them on our website.

Athol Jackson.

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CEGSA NEWS for SALE

Digital Copies of the CEGSA NEWS (issues 1 to 215, in text-readable form) and Annual Reports (1956 to 2008, most in text-readable form) are now available on a CD for $25 plus postage and handling ($3 in Australia).

CEGSA members get a discount and can purchase their copy for $10 plus postage.
Monies raised will be used to create a digital index to the articles and to complete the text-readable digital copies of our Occasional Papers.

Orders to: *Graham Pilkington*

Extract from *The South Australian Naturalist* **83**(1): 26–28. (Reproduced with permission)

MAMMAL REMAINS, INCLUDING THE WHITE-FOOTED RABBIT-RAT *CONILURUS ALBIPES*, FROM THE FLEURIEU PENINSULA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Matthew McDowell[1,2] *and Graham Medlin*[2]
[1]Flinders University of South Australia, GPO Box 2100, Adelaide 5001
[2]Mammal Section, South Australian Museum, North Terrace, Adelaide 5000
Email: *matthew.mcdowell@flinders.edu.au*

In 2003, Grant Gartrell collected a small number of fossils from Sellicks Hill Cave (5A5), a gated roadside cave, approximately 40 km south of Adelaide, on the Fleurieu Peninsula, South Australia. The small mammal remains were hand picked from a rocky surface approximately 60 m inside the right hand fissure of the cave (Gartrell pers. comm.). Three species were identified from the bones collected: the White-footed Rabbit-rat *Conilurus albipes* (**Figs 1a, 1b, 2 & 3**), Common Brushtail Possum *Trichosurus vulpecula* (**Figs 4a & 4b**) and the Eastern Quoll *Dasyurus viverrinus* (**Figs 5a & 5b**). Due to the small sample size a collecting agent could not be positively identified, though most specimens were from young individuals and therefore may have been collected by an owl. The age of the material is unknown, but it is thought to have accumulated during the Holocene (the last 10 000 years).

The Fleurieu Peninsula experiences among the highest rainfall averages in South Australia. Its pre-European vegetation was dominated by Eucalyptus forests and woodlands, including *Eucalyptus obliqua*, *E. fasciculosa*, *E. cosmophylla* and *E. cladocalyx*, with a sclerophyllous-shrub understorey including *Banksia marginata*, *Allocasuarina* spp. shrubs and *Xanthorrhoea* sp. (Armstrong *et al.* 2003; Bickford and Gell 2005).

Dasyurus viverrinus and *T. vulpecula* were recorded in the southern Mount Lofty Ranges at the commencement of European settlement (Armstrong *et al.* 2003) and both probably occurred in the Fleurieu district. *Dasyurus viverrinus* is now considered to be extinct in the region and Armstrong *et al.* (2003) proposed that *T. vulpecula* be considered rare. However, this is the first confirmed record of *C. albipes* from the Fleurieu Peninsula (Robinson *et al*. 2000). Gould (1863) recorded that Governor George Grey sent him (at least one specimen of) *C. albipes* when Grey was governor of the colony of South Australia (1841–1845), but did not note its provenance. In a note to John Gould, Governor Grey wrote:

> *This animal lives among the trees. The specimen I sent you, a female, had three young ones attached to its teats when it was caught; the mother has no pouch, but the young attach themselves with the same or even greater tenacity than is observable in the young of* Marsupiata*. While life remained in the mother they remained attached to her teats by their mouths, and grasped her body with their claws, thereby causing her to present the appearance of a Marsupial minus the pouch. On pulling the young from the teats of the dead mother, they seized hold of my glove with the mouth and held on so strongly that it was difficult to disengage them.*

Live specimens of *C. albipes* were collected from eastern Australia shortly after the commencement of European settlement (Dixon 2008) and Gould (1863) wrote that *C. albipes* 'is dispersed over all parts of New South Wales, Port Phillip and South Australia but is nowhere very abundant'. The distribution of *C. albipes* in South Australia is known from Holocene fossil deposits only (Robinson *et al*. 2000). The species has been recorded from caves in the South East of South Australia (Reed and Bourne 2000), from Fromm's Landing in the Murray Mallee (Wakefield 1964) and from two sites near Burra (Mount Bryan and Ulooloo) in the Eastern Pastoral Province (Robertson *et al*. 2000[1]). Its pre-European distribution was predicted to include the Fleurieu Peninsula (Dixon 2008) but this is the first evidence that the species inhabited the region.

As it became extinct shortly after European settlement little is known of the environmental requirements of *C. albipes* (Dixon 2008). Robinson *et al*. (2000) state that it probably occupied woodlands and open forest where it would have lived in hollow tree limbs, suggesting that the species would have been quite suited to the vegetation of the Fleurieu Peninsula. The cause of the extinction of this large rodent is unknown but probably relates to habitat change and loss resulting from European settlement, farming practices and the introduction of European

domestic and feral animals.

REFERENCES

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[1] **Note:** The map showing the subfossil distribution of *Conilurus albipes* in South Australia on p. 387, Fig. 2, of Robinson *et al*. (2000) does not show the location of the Mount Bryan and Ulooloo subfossil sites, but the sites are listed in the table in Appendix I, p. 399 as Sites 33 & 34. The coordinates for the sites are listed in Appendix II, p. 402, under the heading 'Eastern Pastoral Province' near the end of the paper.

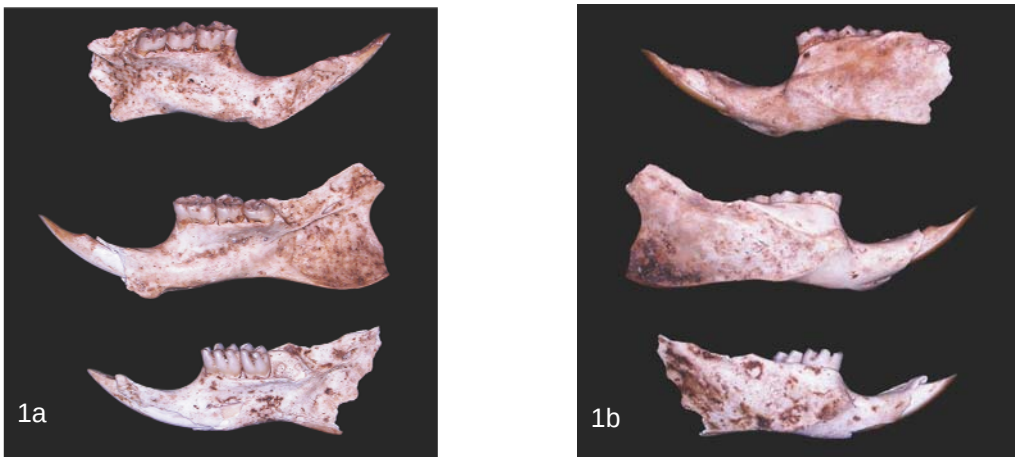

Fig. 1: (a) Lingual and **(b)** buccal views of one left and two right dentaries of *Conilurus albipes*from Sellicks Hill Cave. Length of the middle incomplete dentary = 33.3 mm. (The incisor in the bottom specimen has been accidentally pushed into the dentary.)

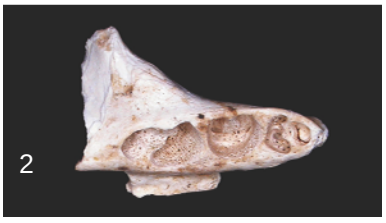

Fig. 2: Occlusal view of the left maxilla of a juvenile *C. albipes*, showing the molar alveoli. Length of the fragment = 13.0 mm.

Fig. 3: Left incisor of an adult *C. albipes*. Outside width from tip to rear of the incisor = 16.5 mm.

Fig. 4: (a) Occlusal and **(b)** lingual views of the left dentary of a juvenile *Trichosurus vulpecula*. Length of the fragment = 39.0 mm.

Fig. 5: (a) Buccal and **(b)** occlusal views of the right maxilla of *Dasyurus viverrinus* with M^3 and molar, premolar and canine alveoli visible. Length of the fragment = 27.3 mm.

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A PLEA from your Librarian –Keep those clippings rolling in

Over the last decades, Fred Aslin with help from Kevin Mott, numerus wives and anyone failing to take a wide enough detour, has been accumulating a collection of articles from newspapers, magazines and other publications. Added to this are articles from CEGSA's Speleo Oddities. These articles pertain to caves, caving, and the people involved (mostly landowners, speleologists and CEGSA members) and mainly relate to the areas of Australia in which CEGSA has some involvement but do cover all articles that have been found in local publications.

Fred lives in Mount Gambier hence has naturally focused on the newspapers of the south east of SA. What CEGSA needs from ALL its' members is to submit any article that they come across. Many local newspapers that only cover a few suburbs in metropolitan Adelaide have an occasional feature of interest but are most unlikely to be seen by anyone living outside the local area. These are of special interest because YOU are most likely to spot them, and Fred isn't. Fred has also been searching the major interstate newspapers for primarily South Australian cave-related articles. But he can't do it all himself.

Don't assume that someone else will have submitted a copy. It's better for us to have multiple copies than none. Besides, yours will be crease-free!

The database has well over 6000 entries from newspapers and magazines. In the near future I want to expand the scope to include periodicals, starting with our own NEWS. Kevin Mott has been methodically supplying annual indexes of our NEWS that are printed in the NEWS enabling some searching to be done via the new text-readable set of issues. Now we want to be able to electronically access this information in a more structured manner.

Graham Pilkington

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Notes From General Meetings

May 2009

Nil.

June 2009

1 The bat counting project on the June long-weekend in the south-east was. attended by Ian Lewis, Fred Aslin, Kevin Mott, Graham Pilkington, Marie Choi, Mark Sefton and others led independent trips to several caves each on the Saturday. The Friends of Naracoorte Caves visited the caves around the Reserve and nearby. The lower south east count was about 11,000.

2 Harry Harris has accepted the position of CEGSA Search and Rescue Coordinator, taking over from Tim Payne. Harry has also agreed to be a South Australian contact point for the ASF S&R. He has been sponsored by the CDAA to attend a S&R course, to be held in New Zealand, on the organisational aspects of S&R.

3 Committee has appointed Stan Flavel to a vacant Committee position as a result of Paul Harper's resignation, which was ratified by this meeting.

4 A call was made by email and at this meeting for nominees to fill the vacant Committee position. None were received.
If any full member would like to be on the committee and help run the group, please let a committee member know.

5 A summary of the Committee recommendations regarding the creation of 2 new awards was made to the meeting.

The first award is optionally given each year to one or more members for outstanding contributions to CEGSA or its' activities over the previous year.

This was accepted by the meeting.

The second type of award is recognition of sustained effort over a protracted period that has created a significant contribution to the Group, its' members, or in karst. The definition is to be left to and evolve with the selection process.

For the second type the following motion was moved and seconded:

"That a general merit award, able to be nominated by any member, can be given to any member on decision of a panel of 3 Life Members".

The motion was put and carried.

It was left with the Committee to organize the implementation of this motion including selection of the 3 Life Members but the feeling of the meeting was that the 3 selected persons should be actively involved in the Group and preferably not on Committee.

These awards would be made by Committee and announced and presented at the AGM.

July 2009

Nil. (no quorum)

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CEGSA has purchased an A3 scanner

The scanner will be used to convert our Records into electronic form. Until now we have been using an A4 scanner but this is inefficient for larger documents, entailing multiple scans and electronic splicing. Most of the cave records held in folders and on Master Sheets & past meeting minutes were written onto foolscap sheets. We also have many maps and many newspaper clippings much larger than A4.

Members can borrow the scanner for their own use but CEGSA Records get priority. The period of loan will have to be no more than a week at a time. Priority will be given to those persons contributing their scanned images to CEGSA Records (karst-related images of course!) and to those providing assistance with the scanning of CEGSA Records.

Graham Pilkington

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REMINDER

Members are reminded that CEGSA will reimburse all reasonable expenses incurred by members in catering to the operation of the Group, execution of Office bearer activities; and running Group functions. If the expense will be beyond the pre-approved budget, then it's suggested that the member get prior approval from the Committee or a General Meeting before expending the money.

The Committee

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Date	Type of Event	Description	Contact
26/08/09	General Meeting	Royal Society Room, SA Museum, Adel. Surveying Workshop	Tim Payne
29/08/09	Working Bee	Library and records	Graham Pilkington
05/09/09	Training	Survey Training Reynella Cave	Tim Payne
09/09/09	Committee Meeting	TBA	Mark Sefton
12/09/09	Caving	Corra Lynn Wishing Well dig	Graham Pilkington
23/09/09	General Meeting	Royal Society Room, SA Museum, Adel. Fossil recognition and deposits	Aaron Camens
26/09-18/10/09	Caving	Nullarbor, including Old Homestead Cave.	Graham Pilkington
14/10/09	Committee Meeting	TBA	Mark Sefton
24/10/09	Workshop	Corra Lynn - Creative Photography Trip	Ian Lewis
28/10/09	General Meeting	Royal Society Room, SA Museum, Adel. Creative Photography followup from 24th	Ian Lewis
31/10/09	Working Bee	Library and Records	Graham Pilkington
11/11/09	Committee Meeting	TBA	Mark Sefton
11/11/09	CEGSA NEWS	Articles due	Athol Jackson
25/11/09	General Meeting	Royal Society Room, SA Museum, Adel. End of Year BBQ	Graham Pilkington Chris Gibbons
28/11/09	Working Bee	Library and Records	Graham Pilkington
???????	Caving	Kangaroo Island sometime this year	Grant Gartrell
	Training	Ad Hoc training	Tim Payne
	Caving	Ongoing Vic Fossil survey	Gary Woodcock
	Caving	Continuing Fleurieu Peninsula Exploration	Grant Gartrell

It is desirable that caving trips involving club members should, where possible, be registered as CEGSA Trips. To do this, the nature and timing of the trip must be nominated to the Trip Liaison Officer and/or minuted at a General Meeting of Members. The member registering such a trip must be an accredited CEGSA Trip Coordinator and must agree to act in this capacity for the trip. There must also be an accredited trip leader with the appropriate skill endorsement to take a dependent party caving.
Also, please ensure that a report of the trip is submitted in a timely manner.

NOTES.